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Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 INR-05 NSC-05 NSCE-00

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R 241213Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1935
INFO USSAG NKP
CINCPAC

S E C R E T BANGKOK 4894

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, TH, US
SUBJ: GENERAL KRIT SIWARA ON U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWALS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. I CALLED ON ROYAL THAI ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL KRIT SIWARA MARCH 23. I ASKED KRIT ABOUT THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT'S ONE-YEAR DEADLINE FOR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS FROM THAILAND. KRIT'S IMMEDIATE REPLY WAS A QUESTION: "DO YOU REALLY THINK KHUKRIT'S GOVERNMENT WILL LAST TWELVE MONTHS?" (WE ADDRESS KRIT'S COMMENTS ON THIS ISSUE IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE.)

2. KRIT POINTED OUT THAT FORMER PRIME MINISTER SENI PRAMOT HAD SET AN 18-MONTH DEADLINE FOR TOTAL U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM THAILAND BUT HAD ADDED "NO IFS." KHUKRIT, IN CONTRAST, HAD SAID: "TWELVE MONTHS, BUT IF." THERE WERE THUS LOOPHOLES. I POINTED OUT THAT TWELVE MONTHS FROM NOW WOULD BE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 1976 DRY SEASON AT A TIME WHEN NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES WERE EXPECTED TO BE IN THE MIDST OF A GENERAL OFFENSIVE IN SOUTH VIETNAM. KRIT AGREED THAT THE TIMING WAS BAD, AND SAID THAT ALL THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WOULD HAVE TO DO WOULD BE TO SIT, "DRINK HOT TEA" AND WAIT FOR OUR TROOPS TO GO.

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3. I ASKED KRIT HOW HE THOUGHT WE SHOULD PROCEED WITH OUR

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DRAWDOWNS. HE ADVISED THAT WE CONTINUE THEM STEP BY STEP AS WE DID IN 1974. I PROBED ABOUT AN ACCEPTABLE FIGURE, AND HE SAID THAT LAST YEAR'S REDUCTION OF APPROXIMATELY 10,000 MANPOWER SPACES WOULD BE SATISFACTORY. HE LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT WE SHOULD NOT WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT THE ONE-YEAR DEADLINE.

4. COMMENT: KRIT BELIEVES THE ONE-YEAR ULTIMATUM WILL BE IN-OPERABLE FOR TWO REASONS. IF KHUKRIT'S GOVERNMENT LASTS, KRIT THINKS THAT THE TURBULENT SITUATION IN INDOCHINA A YEAR FROM NOW COULD BRING ABOUT A REVERSAL OF KHUKRIT'S POSITION THROUGH USE OF THE LOOPHOLES IN KHUKRIT'S POLICY STATEMENT. IF KHUKRIT'S GOVERNMENT DOES NOT LAST, AND KRIT SAID HE DOESN'T EXPECT IT TO BEYOND SEPTEMBER 1975 AT THE LATEST, THEN THE DEADLINE BECOMES VOID.

5. I DO NOT BELIEVE WE CAN OR SHOULD TOTALLY IGNORE THE ONE-YEAR DEADLINE IN OUR PLANNING, HOWEVER. WE WILL BE COMING IN WITH OUR RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO PROCEED GIVEN THIS NEW ELEMENT IN THE SITUATION.
MASTERS

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